

Varsity hosts Extensive Livestock Expo

The first ever, Extensive Livestock Expo officially kicked off at the University of Nairobi's College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences (CAVS).

Themed, "*Herding for the Markets*", farmers were urged to put more effort in producing the best yields for the market. At the opening forum, stakeholders discussed ways of increasing livestock outputs and access to markets.

The Expo aims at improving the potential of farmers to earn more from their livestock, converting existing research into action and enable farmers explore, policy makers to understand the needs of the farmers.

Speaking at the expo, the Chief Guest, the Principal Secretary, State Department of Fisheries, Prof. Micheni Ntiba, noted that livestock play an important economic and social cultural role among the pastoralists communities and that there is need to improve on this. Among the challenges facing farmers in accessing the markets include; poor breeds, nutrition, public health concerns, inputs and poor road infrastructure.

The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Peter Mbithi, noted that mandate of the University is to embody the aspiration of the Kenyan people and to dissolve the ivory tower and indeed the Expo offered researchers a chance to do just that. The expo also gave the University a chance to create linkages with industry. He said that research helps in improving the quality and quantity of livestock production.

Paul Wanyaga, CEO, Kenya Markets Trust, revealed that agriculture has the same potential to contribute 12 percent to the GDP. He challenged policy makers to develop the sector. More than 10 million Kenyans directly depend on livestock for their livelihood. The multiplier effect will affect those in the transport, inputs and processors.

The Expo partners include KCB Foundation, the Government of Kenya, Kenya Markets Trust and SNV Kenya.

The expo which will run from November 4 to 6, 2015 has brought together researchers, exhibitors and livestock farmers.